



Town of Islip  
STATE OF THE TOWN  
*January 28, 2010*

Presented by: Supervisor Phil Nolan



# STATE OF THE TOWN

Good morning. Thank you all for coming.

To say that it has been a difficult year for the Town of Islip would be an understatement. Like so many municipalities across the country, Islip's financial state was a casualty of the national economic crisis. Plummeting mortgage tax revenues and prior fiscal mismanagement forced us to make some tough decisions when budgeting for 2010. While other towns talked about restructuring, we actually did it, and because of such belt tightening, we have entered the new year with cautious optimism.

As I look around this room, I am reminded of how important a dedicated team is. It is you – the commissioners and department heads – who have effectively led your respective departments to achieve the Town's goals in the face of shrinking revenues.

And it is precisely because of you that we have been able to do more with less. It is because of you that we are leading the way.

Since I took office, my highest priority has been to save taxpayer money by reforming the Town from top to bottom. Strong management, a more efficient workforce, and innovative solutions to complex problems have enabled us to do just that. Because of the hard work of our managers and employees, I can confidently say that the Town of Islip is better positioned to attack the challenges that we face.

Having lived in Islip for more than 50 years, I know there is no place on Long Island that can compare. From our acres of pristine parkland, to our miles of beautiful beaches, to our thriving

small-town communities, and to our claim to fame – the Long Island MacArthur Airport – we’ve got it all. This is exactly why I chose to raise my family here, and I’d like to see my children raise their families here.

I’m totally invested in Islip – my mother still lives here – and I’m committed to leading this Town to be its very best. I’m proud to say that over the past three years, we’ve already accomplished a great deal. Three years ago, Islip had some serious problems. There was a cloud hanging over our fabulous airport and money was being wasted left and right. Since then, we have worked to change the culture and return to our core mission: Serving the residents of this Town to the best of our ability in the most cost-effective manner possible.

### Accomplishments

We have managed to strike a balance between improving services and saving money. It is because of this and smart budgeting practices that we achieved a bond rating increase last year which put us at the top of Long Island’s municipalities in the eyes of rating agencies.

The numerous cost-cutting measures that I have implemented – the reduction in overtime spending by \$1million per year for three years, the reduction of the workforce by 20%, fleet and cell phone reform, the elimination of confidential pay, the installation of GPS units in Town vehicles, the change in our third party administrator for workers’ compensation – collectively have saved Islip nearly \$15 million since 2006.

An accomplishment this administration is particularly proud of is the creation of the Department of Public Safety Enforcement, which has streamlined the safety and code enforcement functions of the Town. This saves money while enhancing the Town’s ability to deal with code violations

in a timely manner. We can now effectively attack the quality-of-life problems many constituents face on a daily basis, from illegal rentals to noise violations.

Since the establishment of this department, the revenue from parking violations alone has doubled, going from approximately \$400,000 in 2008 to about \$800,000 in 2009, and major strides have been made in promoting a safe and peaceful environment for Islip Town residents.

In this same vein, we must be fully prepared to handle crises, which is why I created the Office of Emergency Management. Islip is leading the way in this field, being one of the first Towns on Long Island to establish an Emergency Operations Center. This center includes advanced equipment to enhance communication among Town departments in the event of an emergency. The center was used for the blizzard that struck at the end of 2009, and is crucial in keeping infrastructure going during a major incident. This office is also indispensable in working to secure funding to re-nourish and protect our barrier beaches, which in turn protect us.

Our Department of Environmental Control is also leading the way. We instituted New York State's first curbside collection of e-waste, and raised our collection from 30,000 pounds to 104,000 pounds, at no extra cost to the Town. We expanded our household hazardous materials program from two days per year to five days per week, again at no extra cost to the Town.

In the months ahead, we eagerly anticipate a landmark partnership with the Town of Brookhaven involving Islip's power-generating waste-to-energy facility. This intermunicipal agreement will save both Towns a great deal of money and will reduce our carbon footprint.

We also realize that improving the little things in our Town makes all the difference.

- We've cut the time it takes to resolve complaints like pot holes and fallen trees. Working with our civic groups, the Department of Public Works launched Operation Sign Pollution, which has dramatically improved the aesthetic quality of our communities.
- Councilman Parrington has made it a major part of his agenda to improve services available to veterans with the Town's first Veterans' Service Organization and the installation of an informational veterans hotline, 244-VETS.
- With the launch of our new website, the Town will be making it easier for residents to obtain information, apply for permits and make various payments.
- We're also excited that Tax Receiver Ginny Allen is working towards being able to accept credit card payments, thus saving our constituents valuable time and money.
- In 2008 and 2009, our Department of Planning received the most funding of any Town from Suffolk County's Downtown Revitalization Program, which has gone towards streetscapes throughout Islip. In virtually every hamlet, we see the benefits of this funding in the form of new lighting, pavement and landscaping.
- We continue to be a leader in environmental initiatives, as reflected by the prestigious awards we've received from the EPA and the state Department of Environmental Conservation. And Islip was the only Town on Long Island to receive straight "A"s two years in a row from Citizens Campaign for the Environment.
- The Town completed a major renovation of Clayton Street Park in Central Islip, including new tennis and basketball courts, a refurbished recreation center, new fencing,

and a redesigned layout for increased safety, and we will be working with the Police Athletic League to build athletic fields in Central Islip.

- We have taken every step possible to provide free family entertainment, having successfully hosted two annual Winter by the Bay festivals at the Bay Shore Marina, which attracted more than 10,000 of our residents. Additionally, our Labor Day fireworks spectacular was enjoyed by thousands of residents, both on land and on the water.

#### Looking Ahead:

#### Six Announcements

I am immensely proud of the work we have done so far, but there is much more to be done.

With many difficult decisions behind us, I am excited to announce that just as we led the way with cutting wasteful spending, we will now lead the way in innovation.

Today, I am pleased to identify six measures we will be taking in 2010.

First, if we hope to keep Long Islanders on Long Island, we must dedicate ourselves to enhancing public facilities. In this era of “staycations,” people are travelling less and staying home more. With this in mind, Councilman Flotteron has been very involved in the revitalization of the Bay Shore Marina, and with funding from Senator Owen Johnson, we are completing a series of drastic renovations at this jewel of the Islip parks system.

Together, Councilman Flotteron and I are taking the next step as part of our ongoing commitment to this facility.

This summer we will unveil Shipwreck Cove at the Bay Shore Marina – a full-scale spray park that will feature a nautical theme. The creation of this revenue-generating spray park in a highly popular Town park will provide exactly the kind of rejuvenation Islip’s communities need.

Second, we need to improve the aesthetic appeal of our communities. Councilman Parrington is a proven leader in this realm, and it is because of a grant that he secured that we are announcing the purchase of a graffiti removal truck, which is actually being ordered today. This truck, along with the Town's first Graffiti and Litter Removal Task Force, will help us tackle this crucial quality-of-life issue. I am also announcing today that within the next few weeks, I will be putting forward legislation that will aggressively combat the epidemic of blighted properties throughout the Town. Islip residents are proud of where they live, and we will work tirelessly to keep their neighborhoods beautiful.

Third, utilizing new technologies to combat everyday problems is a pillar of this administration. With last week's completion of the brine facility at the Bay Shore Highway Yard, we are the first Town in Suffolk County to be fully equipped to employ this method. By manufacturing and spreading a simple saltwater solution up to 24 hours before snow falls, we can keep our roads clear and safe so our residents can get where they need to go.

Fourth, being a trailblazer with new technologies is something Councilman Edwards is very familiar with. It is because of his dogged pursuit of green energy solutions that Islip is the first Town to expedite the construction of wind turbines on residential properties through amendments to Town Code. Leading by example, we are pleased to announce today that we will be erecting our own wind turbine at the East Islip Marina. We also will be moving ahead with the widespread installation of more efficient street lighting.

When fully operational, these high-tech street lights will save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars per year while reducing the Town's energy consumption.

Next, exciting things will be happening at Islip's world-class Long Island MacArthur Airport. Already, we've established Wi-Fi and a Mother's Room, and we welcomed a US Airways flight from Islip to Washington, DC. This year, we will be opening the recently constructed control tower. And today, I am happy to announce that we are in talks with a new airline, which we hope to bring to the airport in the near future.

Finally, I will be forming a blue ribbon task force comprised of some of Islip's top leaders in business, education, and industry. The committee will be charged with examining the state of Islip's transportation and recreation infrastructure, the general workings of Town government and how all of these things relate to the efficient execution of our core mission. The members of this task force will provide us with an objective snapshot of the Town, which will help guide us into the new decade.

### Conclusion

Islip Town has been – and will continue to be – a leader on Long Island. We led the way when we slashed overtime; we led the way when we installed GPS in all Town vehicles; and we led the way when we began to take proactive cost-saving measures to address the worldwide economic crisis.

Moving forward, we will lead the way in green energy and environmental solutions; we will lead the way in keeping our communities safe, beautiful and fun; and we will continue to lead the way in doing more with less - keeping Town taxes at the lowest level on Long Island; aggressively tackling quality-of-life issues; promoting new business development; and cutting costs while encouraging growth.



In closing, I look forward to continuing to work with Councilman Flotteron and I welcome Councilwoman Bergin's fresh perspective. Together, with Councilmen Edwards and Parrington, this Town Board will achieve great things.

We have accomplished much, but there is more to do. Over the next two years, I will remain a watchdog for taxpayers while doing my best to enhance the services we provide and the quality of life for our residents. I am confident that with the help of the team I see before me, we can continue to improve what we do and better serve the people. They deserve no less.